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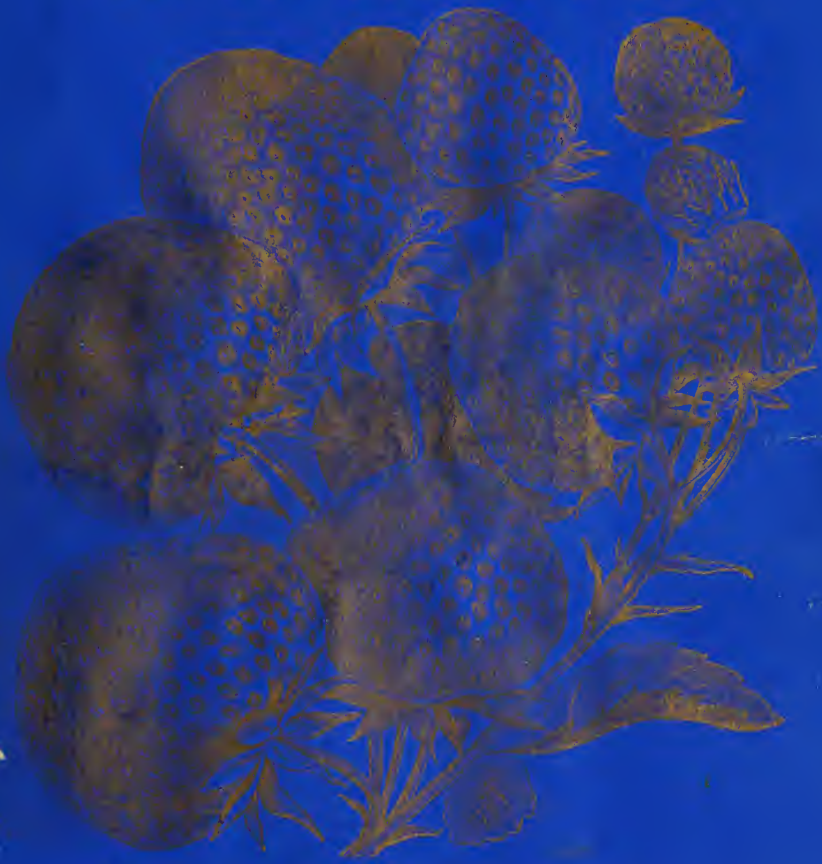
STRAWBERRY CULTURE,

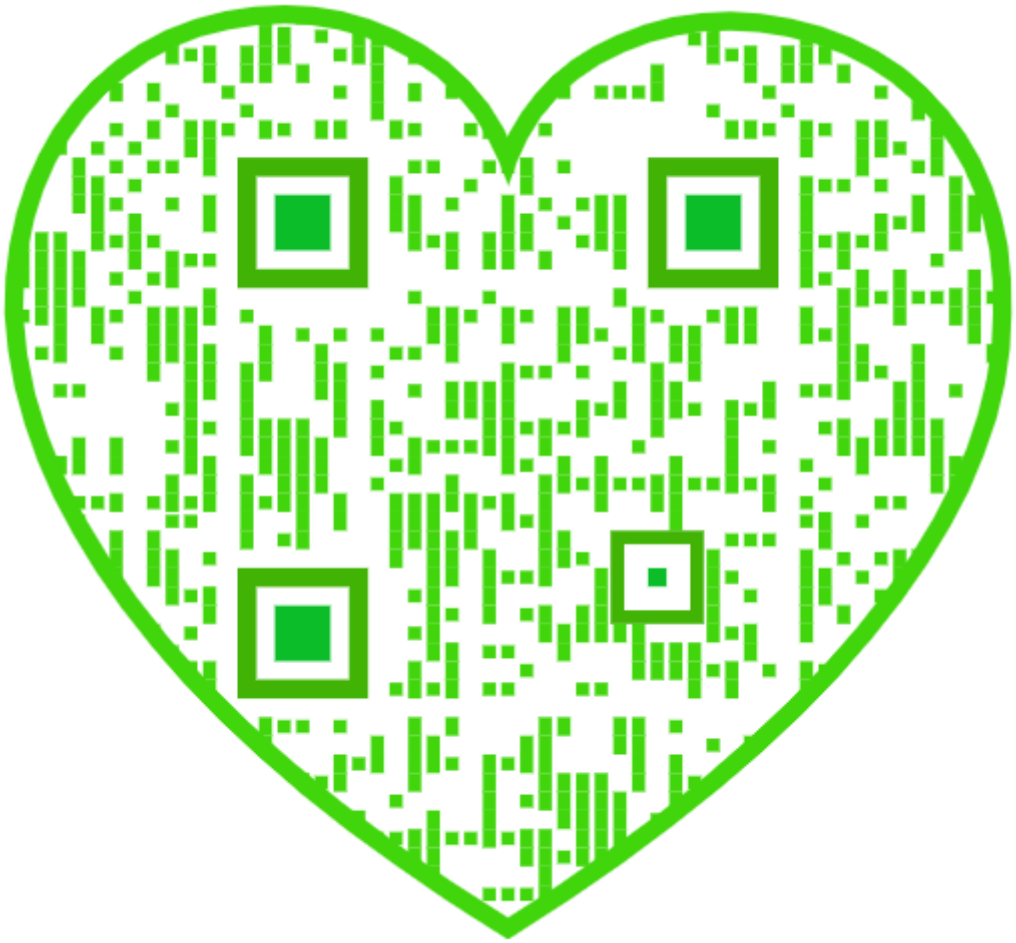
WRITTEN BY

M. O. SMITH,



FRUIT GROWER.

NEW BUFFALO, - MICH.



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UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

INSTRUCTIONS

—:FOR:—

DIGGING STRAWBERRY PLANTS,

Heeling in, Cultivating, Picking, Handling Pickers, Tallying, Packing Berries, Crates, Where to Obtain Pickers, Carriers, Packing Shanties and How to Market.

CHICAGO.

THE BAKER-COLLINGS CO., 14-18 S. CANAL ST.,

1885.

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STRAWBERRY CULTURE.

Before starting out to explain my system of handling the Strawberry plant and Crop at the present day, I would like to detain you a few moments in relating a little of my first experience which no doubt was similar to the way all new beginners commence. I have written this book expressly for those contemplating setting Strawberries that have never had any experience, and those that are already engaged in the business. I bought my Farm of 170 acres where I now reside, in 1871, solely for the purpose of raising fruit and nothing else, and had I known when I commenced what I can tell you to-day about the Strawberry business, I could have accomplished as much in five years, as I have in fourteen, and I can see now that it would have been worth to me thousands of dollars, and I will say to all new beginners and to thousands of them already engaged in the business if they will follow the directions laid down in this book, success must crown their efforts.

When I purchased my Farm in 1871, it was a wilderness except eight acres, which had been set to apples trees some fifteen years before I came on the place. I cleared the ground where I had concluded to build my house, also the front yard which contained about one acre of ground, plowed it the first season and got it ready for Strawberries the next spring, engaged my plants, they came tied up fifty in a bundle with a runner wrapped around them, packed in barrels and so closely packed tha they heat badly in the centre of nearly all the bundles, and I lost full one-third of the plants; I had engaged a good supply however so that I did not fall short very many plants of having enough to set the piece I had prepared. I heeled them in on one side of the piece by digging out a trench with a shovel, I then commenced to set by a line just as all new beginners do, and thousands of them that have been in the business for years, set to day. I used a long handle spade to make the holes with by forcing the blade straight down at one side of the line and working the handle back and forth until the hole was open enough to receive the plant, this way I continued for two and half or three days before I finished setting, I thought when I had finished I had accomplished a big undertaking, and I have never changed my mind; to set even one acre of Strawberry plants by line and with a spade to make the holes is a very tedious job. I can set the same ground now with the same help I had then in four hours.

I cultivated them several times that season and the next spring before I commenced to pick them, I presume I cultivated them one-half dozen times and think the vines was full one foot high when they where in blos-

som. I engaged my crates and one-half dozen pickers and the morning we where to commence, the rain poured down in torrents and did not hold up until about nine o'clock, the soil being sandy and so thoroughly cultivated, when we went out to pick we found the berries covered with sand, instead of picking them in the quart boxes, I had them pick in pails, I got all the fanning mill sieves and racks and every thing that would do and placed them around the pump, and as fast as the pickers brought them in, we turned them out and drenched them with water, got off what sand we could. When we had finished picking, I learned that we had about forty minutes to make the only express train that would get our berries into Chicago for the next mornings market, while the man was getting the team and wagon ready every one on the place was doing all they could to get the berries packed into the crates and nailed up ready for shipment, when the team came the berries where dumped into the wagon on the double quick and off went Mike at the drop of the hat; he had just twenty minutes to drive one and a half miles, I told him to drive slow as he could, but make the train. I had nothing but a lumber wagon, but I had the best pair of horses in the country; at a single chirrup they could make a cracker out of the tail board of a wagon. I did not have to ask Mike when he returned whether he had made the train, the color of the bottom boards of the box was sufficient proof, the second day after that I got a statement of my 17 cases of berries and check for 56c. post marked Strawberry Jam seasoned with sand did not sell well in half bushel packages. I did better with my next shipment and had no trouble in getting them picked and put up in good shape, but the price was low and continued to be very low for two years.

I knew of no other place to ship but Chicago, and came very near giving up the business, but I thought I would try it one more season and see if I could not find some point where I could ship and do better.

The next season just before my Strawberries commenced to get ripe, I got board of the cars and commenced to travel, stopping only at medium size towns, I was happily surprised, I found plenty of market for ten times the fruit I had. Every groceryman and fruit dealer I called on was glad to see me after I had made my business known, and all assured me of good prices if I would send them my fruit. I had seven acres of Strawberries that season and when they commenced to get ripe, I commenced to ship to the parties as I had agreed. I did well with my Strawberry crop that season and have continued to, from that day to this. I had three acres of Red Raspberries that commenced bearing that season, and a few days after my Strawberries was out of the way, they came on and I commenced to ship them to the same parties that I had sent my Strawberries to. I got 30c. per quart for the first shipments and the price did not get below 16c. that season. Having found an everlasting market, I commenced at once to put out more of all kinds, three years later I picked twenty-five acres of Strawberries, forty acres of Raspberries, twelve acres of Blackberries and 3000 baskets of Peaches and fully 90 per cent. of all I raised I shipped to country towns. I went out of the Raspberry business on account of not being able to get them picked, to-day I have on my place 6,500 Peach, 4,000 Apple, 400 Pear and 400 Plum and

Cherry Trees, four acres of Grapes and fifty acres of Strawberries.

As I have finished relating a birds-eye sketch of my first three years experience in the strawberry culture, I will now proceed to lay out my theories of how to

DIG,
PICK UP,
HEEL IN,
SET,
CULTIVATE,
PICK,
TALLEY,
PACK,
MARKET.

Having become thoroughly convinced that the mind of man was never intended for a bay to store away practically more than one thing at once and do justice to it, although having had much experience in growing all kinds of fruit, I shall confine my remarks wholly to the Strawberry culture and shall endeavor to explain in as few words as possible

HOW AND WHEN TO SET STRAWBERRY PLANTS.

ALWAYS SET IN THE SPRING.

First engage your plants sometime during the winter, and as soon as your ground will work good in the spring, the earlier the better, get it ready just as you would to raise a good piece of corn. Sod ground will not do unless it was turned under in August. Mark your ground *only one way*, three feet eight inches apart, the same as you would for a piece of corn AND YOUR GROUND IS READY.

When your plants arrive and before you unpack them you must plow a furrow to heel your plants in. If you have marked the ground lengthwise and it is more than thirty rods long you should plow a furrow out at each end of the field so your plants will be handy for the droppers to get. Plow the furrows as close to the fence as good tillable ground will permit. A single furrow eight inches deep. Now unpack your plants and if they are tied up in bundles and prove to be in good order I should heel them in the bundles the whole length of these furrows. You will find the plants hurt in the center of the bundles if anywhere and the roots will be a brown color, should you find many of them in this condition, break open every package and scatter them in the bottom of these furrows covering them entirely over with dirt fully one-half inch deep.

Do not press them down any when you cover them or do not walk on them.

Now your plants are secured and should it be hot, dry or stormy weather the following week or even ten days so you could not set them *they will be found in good order.*

Now you are ready to commence business any time the weather will permit and we will suppose you are setting a field of ten acres; to make quick work of it you should have eight men to set and eight boys from ten to twelve years old to drop. Just at night and the day before you expect your help take your team and plow and commence plowing out the

trenches to set your plants in. Set your plow so it will run about four inches deep. Let your team straddle the marks you have made, and be quite particular to hold the plow so it will split the mark in the center. Commence on one side of the field and plow back and forth until you have furrows enough for your setters to make one round. The object in plowing these furrows out just at night is not only to have them ready when your help arrives in the morning but to prevent the trenches getting dry before the plants are set in them. You should have a basket that will hold about a peck, for the boys to drop out of, I use peach baskets, and if you have broken open the bundles of plants and covered them with dirt you can use a three tine pitch fork to throw them out of the trench. Throw enough plants out to fill the droppers baskets full, let each take a row and drop the plants in the bottom of the furrow fifteen to twenty inches apart, the setter must get down on his knees to make easy work of it, pick up the plant with his left hand, that is if he is on a furrow where his left hand comes on the land side. Straighten the roots out with the right hand and with the left hand place the plant against the land side of the furrow with the roots hanging straight down and with the right hand pull the dirt from the mold board side on to the roots. You have to make generally two strokes with the right hand to get dirt enough. If the weather be warm and the sun is shining the dropper should not drop any faster than the setter can set them. Start your plow in time to have eight rows more plowed out by the time the setters have finished the sixteen rows plowed out the night before, and if the sun is shining and the weather is dry the man that is holding the plow should govern himself entirely by the setters and not plow any faster than they can set them. If the ground is in good shape and the soil not too heavy, a good one-horse plow will be sufficient. It makes little easier work for the setters to use a one-horse plow. I sometimes put two horses on a one horse plow, it prevents it from dodging around.

Two days with this number of hands will set ten acres; I have set fourteen acres with this help. When you have finished setting its a good idea to cultivate down all the rows where the plow has thrown the furrows together.

Commence and cultivate this field just as you would a piece of corn, hoe when necessary, do not let the weeds get the start of you, they should be cultivated as late as the first of October. I never cut off the runners, the cultivator will throw them around into the rows and if they have done well you will have a matted row of strawberry vines by Nov. 1st a foot wide. I generally hoe the first season three times and never after that, the work being all done with plow and cultivators until they are turned under. I generally pick a field five seasons.

I find nothing better to cultivate with than a two horse walking cultivator. Turn the two inside teeth so they will throw the dirt toward the plants unto the shield, but not too much, drive very slow and hold your teeth so close together that the plant can barely pass through between the shields without pulling it up. By taking this course and starting your cultivator in time and repeating it as often as you see the

weeds appear it will save fully one-half the hoeing. We never use the shields in cultivating after picking. To renovate an old patch that the cereal and white clover is about to run out, put in your two horse plow and turn three quarters of the row under and drag lengthwise corner-wise both ways and then crosswise. It should be done as soon as you get through picking, and the dragging should be done when the ground is not too damp. The piece will have the appearance of being about used up when you get through, but nearly all the plants will straighten up after a shower or two. They should be cultivated until fall.

I always cultivate my Strawberries twice in the spring before they blossom. However there is quite a diversity of opinion regarding this, there are not a few who claim they are more liable to be struck with frost by being cultivated. I have tried both ways and I always get more fruit from those I have cultivated even in the frosty seasons.

Never mulch your plants with straw until you are satisfied there will be no more frost, it is a great benefit to mulch them a week or ten days before you commence to pick. After you have finished picking and the next day if convenient start your walking cultivator and cultivate them all over good, and about two weeks later cultivate them again. As we shall presume you will want to set more ground the coming spring and get your plants from this field it will not do to cultivate them any more this season.

Now as you have been initiated and the back bone of the great dread people have, setting Strawberry plants having been over come ; you have got a field of Strawberries, we have called it ten acres, but suppose it was but one acre, you are now in condition to add to your acreage at a very small expense. You have your plants which is by far the heaviest expense, the labor required to set ten acres of Strawberries in not as expensive as the labor required to plant the same ground to corn five times, as in setting Strawberries, you only have to plow, harrow and work your ground once in five years ; after having cultivated your Strawberries the first season. There is not so much labor afterwards as there is to grow a good piece of corn every year.

HOW TO DIG STRAWBERRY PLANTS

so as not to expose the roots. As you are about to commence digging the plants from the ten acre field you have picked from one season, and as you will have abundance of plants we will presume you intend to set twenty acres, we have been using eight men and boys for help and being usually about all the help that can readily be had by at least the majority of farmers, we will continue with the same number of hands. Strawberry plants cannot be pulled up with the fingers without first loosening them. I have not dug my plants for years with any kind of a tool, I always pick them out of the ground. I first have them loosened, this work being done with a hoe by striking over the plant the same as you would to dig them entirely out of the ground and pull the plant with all the dirt around it a little toward you 3 or 4 inches, strike over the next plant and pull that back where you took the first plant from, when you get through loosening the plants your ground will show

somewhat broken, but anybody not posted would ever surmise what it was done for, as your plants look about as natural as they did before you commenced digging, especially if you do not pick them up for two or three days after they have been loosened, the ground will settle around them and look almost natural, you will find they can be picked up out of the ground just as easy and fast, and the diggers will get over nearly twice the ground they will, to throw them out on top of the ground, they will do it as fast as they can strike with the hoe and when you pick them from the ground into the basket you save one exposure. Proceed to loosen all the plants you think you will need, in this way, be sure and dig enough while you are at it, better throw away a load of plants than to take your help back to dig after you have commenced to set. It takes about 7,000 plants to set an acre. A bushel basket holds 400 plants and by picking up one row you can judge very close when you have enough loosened. Now if the weather looks favorable for you to commence picking up the next day, have your boys come on, that are going to do the dropping and help pick up the plants. I use bushel baskets. Let a man and boy pick two rows together, in one basket, as you are picking up sixteen rows, let your team and wagon with top box on straddle the eighth row and follow close to the pickers so the wagon will be handy for them to empty their plants in. If the sun is shining you should have two teams to receive plants and also have a canvas or blanket to spread over the wagon to shade the plants while being drawn to the field. If the weather is favorable one team can do the business, while the team is gone to unload the pickers can throw their plants into piles and when the team returns the teamster can throw them into the wagon in very few minutes with a three tine fork. Now you are supposed to have your ground that you are going to set the plants in already and marked, with the trench or furrow plowed out close to the fence to heel your plants in the same as we did in the first piece we set. The man that is drawing the plants should use a three tine pitchfork to unload them. Drive close to the trench and pitch them in, if the rows that you are going to set are thirty rods long the trench should be filled nearly full of plants, and as fast as the trench is filled with plants they should be covered with dirt, half or three quarters of an inch deep, which can be done best with a hoe. A boy can do the covering as fast as the plants can be pitched into the trench.

After you have got your plants heeled in, proceed to set as before described. This is how one man and boy can handle and heel in wagon loads of plants in a day, they can handle them about as fast as they can manure. I have handled my plants this way for eight years with perfect satisfaction. Where you have your whole force picking up and *out of the ground,* they are being piled on top of one another *so fast into the basket and wagon* and being handled with a *pitchfork to heel them in and covered* immediately, there is really little or not chance for improvement. Having given you the key that unlocks the successful theory of how to dig Strawberry plants so as not to expose the roots and how one man and boy can transport one-half million of Strawberry plants

in a day from one field to another and heel them in. I will now proceed to explain **how to build cheap packing house** or shanty as we call them, it being the next thing in order, something that is indispensable to a large berry grower, twelve by eighteen is the size I always make, it being large enough for a ten acre field of Strawberries, two shanties will be required if the field contains more than ten acres. I take three, two by four scantling, twelve feet long, saw one end of each piece square, lay them on the ground six feet apart, spike a two by four flatways on the squared end for a plate, then dig three holes six feet apart where you want the centre of your shanty two feet deep, raise this bent up and set the scantling into the holes so that the plate will be level, then take three more two by four, twelve feet long and saw them in the middle, spike on the plates as before and set them on top of the ground nine feet from the centre bent either side, stay with strips tacked to the centre bent, then put a roof board on each corner or side of the roof, the boards will spring down in the middle and will require another support, as a door three feet wide is needed at each corner of the shanty we set this centre support three feet from the end bent which acts not only as a stud to support the roof, but also comes just right to use twelve foot lumber in boarding up the sides. In putting up the two by four to support the centre of roof boards, spike it on to the door studs edge ways and on the side towards the centre of shanty. Now proceed to cover the roof with stock boards twelve feet long, running up and down. As we have plenty of pitch to our roof it will do to spread the first tier of boards four inches apart and cover the openings with the same kind of lumber, the same will do to board up the sides without squaring either end. 1000 feet of one by twelve boards twelve feet long will build a shanty. You want a counter to pack your berries on which should be made across one end of the shanty just back of the doors, this will give the pickers a space of three feet which is plenty of room to enter one door, take out their berries unto the counter and pass out the other door. Make your counter two feet wide, this will give you a room twelve by twelve to store your crates, pack, nail and mark your berries. Some berry growers would tell you to take a few boards, lay one end on the ground and the other on a high fence will answer. I will admit that this kind of a building will do very well for a man that can cover all the berries he has picked during the day with an umbrella. But a grower that picks several hundred cases in a day needs a good well built shanty. More damage can be done in twenty minutes in a heavy storm than it would cost to build twenty such buildings. Three men will build one complete in one-half day, I have six of them on my farm.

Now before I explain how to proceed to pick and handle a crop of Strawberries, number of pickers required per acre and help necessary to watch the pickers, tally, nail and mark. I will first explain my new invention for tallying berry pickers, worth $100.00 to any large berry grower after useing it five years, three times the amount would not prevent me from having it. I have illustrated it here in full size so you can take this book to any printer and have them made, it should be made on good

ILLUSTRATION OF TICKET.

ACTUAL SIZE.

QUARTS. 188

NAME OF PICKER.

1	2	6	4
	4½	9	6
1	2	6	4
	9	18	12
1	2	6	4
	13½	27	18
1	2	6	4
	18	36	24
1	2	6	4
	22½	45	30
1	2	6	4
	27	54	36
1	2	6	4
	31½	63	42
1	2	6	4
	36	72	48
1	2	6	4
	40½	81	54
1	2	6	4
	45	90	60
1	2	6	4
	49½	99	66
1	2	6	4
	54	108	72
1	2	6	4
	58½	117	78
1	2	6	4
	63	126	84
1	2	6	4
	67½	135	90
1	2	6	4
	72	144	96
1	2	6	4
	76½	153	102
1	2	6	4
	81	162	108
1	2	6	4
	85½	171	114
1	2	6	4
	90	179	120
1	2	6	4
	94½	189	126
1	2	6	4
	99	198	132
1	2	6	4
	103½	207	138
1	2	6	4
	108	216	144
1	2	6	4
	112½	225	150

NOT NEGOTIABLE.

M. O. SMITH.

The small figures between 1, 2, 6 and 4 are the money columns, figured to pay the picker 1½ cents per quart.

strong tag paper. The advantages in useing this for tallying berry pickers over all others are almost numberless. First when you give the tickets out, it is quite important that you should put the pickers name on their tickets, as when a picker has agreed to pick for you until the season is over, they cannot cut up any mean trick and sell their ticket to some of the other berry pickers and run away. It holds them right to their contract. "No Dodging," and then again it benefits the pickers if any of them loose their ticket in the field, a circumstance that happens almost hourly, the finder can have no object in keeping it. The pickers should put a string through the eyelet and tie the ticket to a button hole in their clothes, where it will be handy to punch every time they come to the shanty with berries. I assure you it is the most practical ticket ever used for the purpose. In this State we have three size carriers for the pickers to carry their boxes in, four, six and eight quarts and when a picker brings in any number of quarts, we punch out a figure or figures on the ticket that corresponds with the number of quarts. Commence at the top of the ticket to punch and do not skip any figures. The person useing the punch should be a little particular and not deface the money colum. When a picker has picked his ticket full, give him another, but do not take the old one up, let them all carry their tickets until pay day. You must have a punch made of your own design, especially if you reside where your pickers can visit railroad conductors. Cost $2.00 to $3.00.

To pay off place a table by a window in your barn or house and take as many plates as you have denominations of money, turn your silver out into them, call up one picker at a time, take up the check, figure them up which can be done in a moment, pay him off, call up another. I paid 150 pickers last season $640 in less time than two and one-half hours. Had I been useing the old tickets it would have taken me two days, and with so much complication hence more liable to mistake.

HELP REQUIRED TO PICK AND HANDLE TWENTY ACRES OF STRAWBERRIES.

As I always depend on country towns for my market, especially when there is a full crop of berries, and as grocery dealers must have them every day in order to supply their demands, I always make calculation to pick one-half of my ground every other day, which would require about fifty pickers, some would say thirty would be quite plenty, but I would prefer fifty to thirty. In fact to a man that has the berries, it is one of the most essential points in the business, first plenty of pickers, second plenty of markets. As we have decided to pick one half of the field every day and use fifty pickers, one man can take charge of them, it will require one person that you can depend on to punch the tickets, one man to pack the berries and one to nail and help pack when he can, when you are picking your largest pickings, it will require two to pack. Now presuming that you have ordered your crates, stored them in your shanties, all you can of them, left room enough to commence business having ordered your carriers that the pickers use to carry their boxes that they pick in, we are ready to commence picking as soon as the *dew disappears*. The carriers can be had at a small expense, where

you get your crates, and the northern crate manufacturing towns are St. Joseph and Benton Harbor, of Mich., Geo. E. Smith and A. W. Wells & Co., of St. Joseph, and Ingham, Leslie & Co., of Benton Harbor, all reliable firms.

Now supposing the pickers have all got their tickets, and their carriers filled with boxes and the dew has disappeared ; I call on my pickers and give each one a row, but before I allow them to pick a berry, I step out before them, it being just as essential to have pickers at the latter end of the season as at the commencement, and as I want, they should all hear what I have to say, I hallow at the top of my voice: Berry Pickers, attention, I wish to say before we commence picking, that I shall pay the highest price paid by all large berry growers for picking berries, this season. It being just as essential to have pickers the latter part of the season as at the commencement, I wish to have it plainly understood that I shall expect every picker present to be here every day necessary to pick berries, until we have finished for this season, I shall further expect every picker to endeavor to pick all the ripe berries on their rows, and only those that are ripe, and pick their rows from end to end; under no circumstances whatever leave your row unfinished, and when you go to the shanty with your berries always make a mark of some kind, that you may know when you return where you left off. You must pick your boxes rounding full and take pains to top them out with the finest and largest berries. The tally man has strict orders to tally no picker until they have complied with this rule. I wish to say further in regard to eating, as berries are very scarce and high, it is rulable not to eat any until after the third picking when I shall have no objection to your eating all you wish. Now if there are any here that think they cannot conform to these rules you will oblige by leaving your carriers at the shanty.

You will find this a very essential piece to speak before you commence picking. As when berries get scarce long towards the last pickings, they will make all kinds of excuses, your contract being made in the presence of all of them there is no dodging. It is the duty of the man that takes charge of the pickers to see that they pick all the ripe berries, and only those that are ripe, see that they pick their rows through and that no rows are left unpicked. It will not do to let your pickers skip along and leave many ripe berries as they will be too ripe for the next shipment and it will be impossible to prevent them from being picked, and you may be sure of unfavorable returns. It is the duty of the person that punches the tickets not to tally only those that have their boxes well filled up with good sound berries. It is the duty of the packers to carefully pack the boxes into the crates, not too full, and plenty full enough, and to put the boxes that have the finest and largest fruit on the top tier. It is the duty of the person that nails the crates, to lay the cover on carefully, right where it should be nailed and not move it afterwards, and drive his chair nail as light as possible, and when he sets the crate away to handle it carefully. Discharge any man that handles a crate of berries rough the second time he does it.

As I have described the duty of every one necessary to carry on the

business, except the boss, I will now proceed to lay out his work, having occupied that position fourteen years myself. I can assure him and I think he will bear me out in the assertion after he has occupied the position for a couple of years, that it is easier put on paper than done. It is the duty of the boss to take a daily paper from the first of April until he gets through picking berries. Object, so as to know what portion of the country Jack Frost has niped in the bud, also it is very important that he should keep posted on the daily receipt and market price in large cities. In the state of Michigan spring frosts are about the only enemy we have to contend with, which usually happens between May 5th, and 18th, while the berries are in blossom, and no man can form any idea where to look for the best market until the frosty seasons are over. If the frost has been pretty general and has killed one half of your crop, you need not be the least concerned about finding a market, they will all be wanted at high prices. Large cities will be your market, and a boy eighteen years old can handle your whole crop, so far as the shipping is concerned, but when the frost has only struck in local spots and only a few at that, you may rest assured that all large cities like Chicago, St. Louis, Cincinnatti, Detroit, Cleveland, Milwaukee, will be glutted with berries and just at the very time when you are making your largest pickings, just at the very time when eight cents per quart, would be worth more to you than $20.00 per bushel would be for the first two or three shipments, and unless you make preparations to evade these markets you can depend upon it that your return will not be very satisfactory. While at the very time there are plenty of small places that are actually starving for strawberries.

It is a very simple problem to solve why this is so. The Commission Houses in all large cities are very anxious to receive large consignments, it means ten per cent. to them, and they keep the farmer and berry grower well supplied with stencils and all the tools necessary to ship their fruit to them, and they not only keep out their runners soliciting consignments, but as another inducement, they deposit their money almost at the farmer's door in advance so that he may be sure of getting what little money is coming to him. I will venture to make the assertion that fully 90 per cent. of all the berries grown in the state of Michigan are consigned to commission houses in large cities. The price most always being satisfactory for the first three or four pickings, (just when they have no fruit to speak of) *they continue*, the market begins to break under its heavy receipts, he knows of no other market that is better, it is too late to try to find one, he is compelled to continue let the consequences be what they may. These are undisputed facts, and no berry grower will deny it. Now if every farmer or berry grower that possesses an acre or more of strawberries, as soon as he can determine that, we are to have a full crop, or three-fourths of a crop, will proceed at once to find a market for a portion of his fruit outside of the large cities—say one half of his crop. I shall always try to find a market *for all* of my fruit outside of large cities when there is a full crop.

Now, suppose all the Fruit growers would make calculations in time

to ship one-half of their crop to outside points, small towns; just think for a moment what a wonderful effect it would have on Chicago's market, and the market of all large towns of ten to thirty thousand population, that Chicago and all other large cities use for their dumping ground when in the midst of an over-stocked market.

The commission men are compelled to send your berries broadcast over the country in order to get back the money they have invested in freights. Why will you continue year after year sending your fruit to a market that you know will bring you no satisfactory return? Remember, three-fourths of Chicago's receipts of Strawberries are purchased by large buyers, who make it their business to supply small country towns. Now, if these buyers can purchase your fruit of your commission house and reship it to small places and make a profit—and I guarantee you they make a good big profit, or they would not be engaged in the business—why not arm yourself with the necessary tools to find places, and plenty of them where there is a market for all; yes, three times the entire strawberry product of to-day.

There is nothing produced on the farm that will pay over one-fifth as much as a good berry crop of any kind, excepting peaches, if the producer is posted where to find a market. It is the duty of the boss to arm himself with all the necessary information to find these markets. As I have said before, take a daily paper, and if you find any location that has been nipped in the bud note it down. (You need not advertise it!) and you may be quite sure when ever you read a report that the strawberry crop has been nipped in the bud in any locality—that there are plenty of towns around that locality that have been nipped also, and you should have a book that contains a map of the state and all the towns in the state with their population, so you can trace out on the map any town near this (?) country you wish to find, the book is so constructed that you can turn instantly to the town and find its population. The book only costs 25 cents per state, and every grower should have a book for each state that he is liable to ship to. I will furnish them to you by mail post paid, on receipt of 30 cents. They are indispensible to any fruit grower. One-half bushel crate of berries sent into a frost-bitten country will pay for one dozen of them.

Now, instead of going to the expense of paying your fare on the cars as I did to find a market, write a letter to the express agent and inclose a postal card for his answer to any town you desire, ask him to send you the names of two or three *responsible* grocery dealers that handle fruit, and they will always reply prompt. I should write to no less than thirty towns to make sure of a good market for twenty acres of strawberries, and as soon as you commence to get answers you should write immediately to the grocery dealers. It being very essential that you get the desired information, I will write a copy of the letter I have used for years.

LETTER.

DEAR SIR:

I have twenty acres of Strawberries that look very fine and promising at present, and as near as I can judge I shall commence picking them about June....st. If you have made no arrangements with others to supply you, I should be pleased to ship to you on commission. If you think you can handle them to good advantage for me, please state about the quantity you think you can handle daily. Also, will you please inform me whether you have much of a home crop this season, what time will they commence to ripen, and were they hurt any by frost. I shall pick my berries every day the weather will permit.

An early reply will greatly oblige,

Respectfully yours,

I would suggest that when you write this letter, that in noting the time you think you will be able to commence picking; always make it two or three days later than you expect, as you may want to ship your first pickings to some other place where you know the market is very high and will only hold up for a day or two. When you commence to receive answers from these letters you must record the names, town and state, and quantity he thinks he can handle. If a home crop, when will they be ready to pick, and how bad they were hurt by frost, if any. Keep each state by itself in a book, so you can turn to it instantly when you are marking your crates. It is a reference you will turn to many times every day you are engaged in shipping your fruit.

When you commence shipping you will necessarily commence with small shipments to each one, and you should write to each consignee and ask them to post you daily; it is my advice, and in fact a rule I have adopted years ago, if I do not hear from a man that I am shipping to after the third shipment and before I make the fourth. I cut him off until I do hear from him. I write all of them to use the wire at my expense anytime they think it to my advantage. Make arrangement with a boy to carry your dispatches, go to the office as many times in a day as there are mail trains, and after you have all the information, you can proceed to make out your slate to mark off your berries. Do not be confined to any one or two states, or even three; ship where you can find the best market, there is no trouble in sending good hard berries 800 miles away, I should not hesitate to double the distance if the weather was cool, I have shipped Red Raspberries the most perishable fruit we handle to Omaha, a distance of 560 miles with good success in the month of July.

Do not commence to mark until you are obliged to, as you can't tell which way the wind may blow from, you are liable to get a dispatch from one saying do not ship any more berries and from another send 50 bushels. Market $10.00, keep your eye peeled. Be ready to make hay while the sun shines, it is only a matter of three weeks, draw a fine bead over all your employees and if you can contrive any way to be at the Post and Telegraph office, in your berry shanty and out among your berry pickers all at the same time. It will be no detriment to the business, I can't say positive however as I never could quite get there.

Keep all your telegraph dispatches and correspondence that you receive from the men that you are shipping to, especially those that quote the price, they may be important, try and get every man that you are shipping to, to quote the price he is geting daily, if you can. *Here mark* the most important point in the whole business, about the third day after you have finished picking, write to every man that owes you for berries, as follows

Dear Sir: I am greatly in need of money and you will do me a great favor by remitting all my due at once, if not convenient to send all, send what you can *with Statement* by return mail.

Respectfully Yours.

The money part is not so essential as the statement, as you may be quite sure every man that you have shipped to through the advice of the express agent is good, but do not let any of them rest until you get a statement from all, after waiting a reasonable time for an answer, all that are hanging fire, write them again and if you get no reply, I would advise you if the amount due will warrant you to take the first train and surprise them with a call, you will not have many, I think a half of one per cent. will cover all the loss I have made in fourteen years and all the losses I ever made was through my negligence in not getting a statement in proper time and the proper time is just as soon as you get through shipping, while it is fresh in his mind that he has sold you berries for so much per quart and that he has not forgotten that he has quoted the price to you several times and that you are posted on what he has sold for. I repeat it again get a statement from all you have consigned your fruit to just as soon as you can

I have forgotten to say that grocery dealers do not charge any more commisssion than commission men do in large cities, 10 per cent. is the rule.

I have said on the first pages of my book, had I known when I commenced in the fruit business what I can tell you now, I could have accomplished more in five years than I have in fourteen. Now I have as it seems to me, laid down almost every step that a beginner is required to take to set, pick, market and cultivate a field of Strawberries ; it is not necessary for you to commence the business on so small a scale as is recommended in all the Agricultual Journals. If you can spare the money to purchase the plants to set ten acres you need not hesitate in the least to do so, if you think you have the ability to follow the direction laid down in this book, I guarantee that you will not fail. Any farmer that is capable of fiting a piece of corn ground so that it will produce a good crop of corn and capable of taking care of it as it should be done, can grow Strawberries successfully.

I can dig the plants on my own ground and set ten acres of Strawberries, hire the laborers. all done less than $5.00 per acre, the average yield of Strawberries is about 100 bushels to the acre, I have not failed in ten years to make them net me $100,00 per acre, in 1882 they netted very nearly 16c. per quart, 1883, 11½c. per quart and last season I shipped 1200 bushels netting 9c.

With a little good advice, I shall close, while I must admit that the demand for Strawberries, has wonderfully increased and no doubt will continue, and has been the Queen of Fruits with me at least to make money out of. I would not advise any farmer to undertake to raise grain and fruit, I have no good reason why they should not be worked together, only those that have tried it have generally made both a failure; as to the best kind of soil, I will say sandy soil is by all means the most natural for Strawberries, they can be grown for one-third less money than they can on heavy soil.

White Clover and Sorrel are deadly enemies if allowed to grow, while here in this locality we have neither to contend with. In fact I think this locality a favored one for all kinds of fruit, all succeed remarkably well and when they have a crop of Peaches anywhere, we have them here. Being located on the east shore of Lake Michigan, we are exempt from deadly frost and being within the sound of the whistles of two great railroad thoroughfares and the crafty steamers that glide the blue waters of Lake Michigan. We are favored with all the facilities for cheap transportation the world affords. This being comparatively a new country and at the price land can be purchased at now, I will venture to make the assertion that any energetic man can pay for all the land he will buy and set to Strawberries out of the third crop.

Wishing you the best of success. I am Respectfully Yours,

M. O. SMITH.

Although having said I should confine my remarks wholly to the strawberry, for the benefit of those inexperienced, I will inform them:

HOW TO SET RASPBERRIES, BLACKBERRIES AND GRAPES.

I set Raspberries and Blackberries six feet apart each way. I mark my ground one way with a marker, and the other way with a two horse plow, using three stakes to plow by, so as to have my furrows straight. I commence to set as soon as the plow is started, I set my plant in the middle of the furrow and where the mark crosses the furrow, no line or stakes to set by are needed. If you have made your marks straight the rows will be as near in line both ways, as though they were set by the most acurate device. One can drop the roots for two or three to set. The setters should use shovels or a hoe, either will do, as in nine cases out of ten the furrow has made all the hole that is necessary, they can be set very fast, it is a good idea to throw a shovel full of the top soil in the bottom of the furrow to set the plant on, also to use the top soil for covering, it takes but a trifle longer and you will be well paid for the extra time To cultivate, start your walking cultivator just the same as you did on your young Strawberries, when they get up and begin to spread, use your one horse cultivator or double shovel, with whiffletree

not over eighteen inches long, sixteen inches is better, when the main shoots to the raspberries have grown two feet high, go over the whole patch and pinch them back. I mean by this, break or cut off one half an inch off the top of all shoots that are two feet high, and about a week later more will appear and you will have to go over them again. I usually pinch them back about four times. This will cause side shoots or laterals as they are called, to be thrown out in great numbers, that is if you have cultivated them as often as you should. When these laterals appear and are about two feet long which will be about four weeks later, to produce a strong, stocky, hardy bush, should be pinched off. I always do this with a long bladed knife made for the purpose, a butcher knife will do. Red raspberry plants grow up from the roots around the old vines.

Handle the laterals of your black raspberries in the same way, unless you wish to raise plants. To raise black raspberry plants, let the laterals grow, in most of soils they will grow to the ground and take root themselves but to insure a large quantity of plants you should throw a shovel full of dirt on all the tips, cut out the old wood of the black raspberry the next spring after picking. The old wood in the red raspberry may be taken out as soon as you have finished picking or the following spring, as you prefer. (Cultivate your raspberries thoroughly both ways, until you have made a good strong large bush,) put two forks full of manure around the roots of each vine the last of October. The next spring cultivate them nearly up to picking time, and I will say you are just about as sure of a good big income as water is sure to run down hill. Do not spend your time putting out a dozen of this and that variety, while you are doing this you can set out a good large field of one kind of the old and reliable varieties that never have failed. Let those experiment that have money.

BLACKBERRIES.

I set blackberries the same as I do raspberries, and handle and cultivate them the same, only they should not be pinched back until the main stalks get three feet high, cut the laterals off the same as you do the red raspberry. If I was going to set a very large field of black raspberries or blackberries I should plow my furrows to set eight foot apart and set the plants three and one half feet apart in the rows. You cannot cultivate them but one way, but it allows you to drive through them with you wagon to mulch and carry out the old brush.

TO SET GRAPES.

I plow a trench both ways, six feet apart one way, and eight feet the other, as the roots of grapes sometimes are quite long I find by running the plow both ways it saves a good deal of digging, there being four ways or furrows that you can lay out the long roots in without digging. The first year let all shoots grow, the second year they should be all trimmed off but two and they should be cut back to about two and one half feet long, the third

year in the spring they should be staked, we use seasoned oak stakes two by two inches wide and four feet long, sharpened and diped into hot coal tar about eighteen inches up (it pays,) they will last a number of years, we use generally but one stake to a vine, to hold the vine to the stake, we take old boots, or pieces of leather can be had at any shoemaker shop, cut them up into one half inch strips and five to six inches long, lap them around the vine and use a number twelve tack, it holds them solid. The best time to trim grapes is in the fall after two or three hard frosts. I trim off all the new wood back usually to one bud. Having no home market for grapes and there being no markets outside of large cities but what are generally supplied by home growers and the price always being as a general thing very low in all large cities, I never could make any money out of my grapes.

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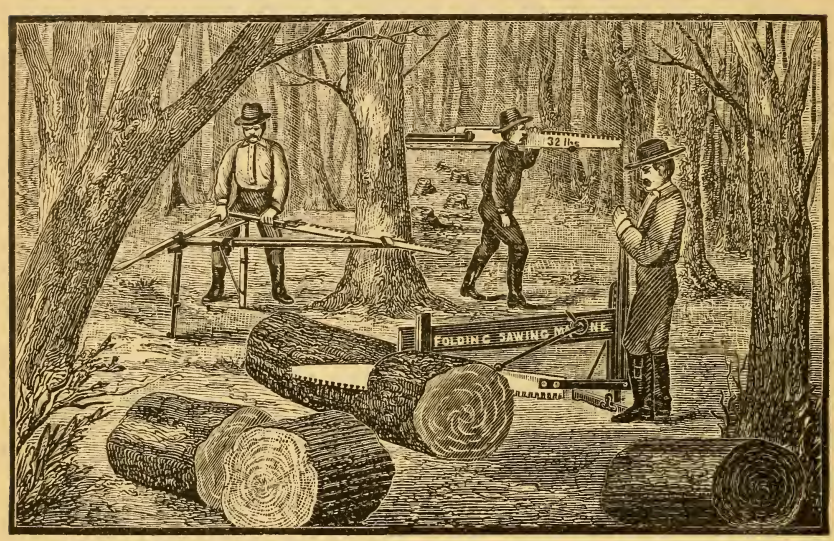

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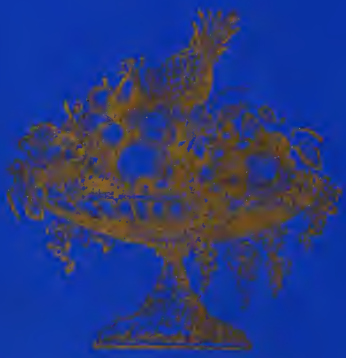
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